The Skibird

Spring 2008

GUARDING AMERICA, DEFENDING FREEDOM
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Magazine of the 109th Airlift Wing, Stratton Air National Guard, Scotia, N.Y.

109th Security Forces Farewell

Commander's Call

Lt. Col. John Russo recently returned to the 109th AW as the Mission Support Group Commander. I had an opportunity to sit down with him during the UTA to answer some questions regarding his time away, his return to the Wing, and his thoughts on the future.

Q: Why did you leave the 109th?

A: I was selected to attend the Air Command and Staff College in Montgomery, Alabama. It was a great year; it really widened my perspective in understanding the Guard and the Air Force. Just as important, I developed personal and professional relationships with many of my classmates throughout the Air Force—many I'm still in contact with today. I believe professional military education is an important component of one's career. If you are able to work it into your civilian career or your family's needs, I strongly recommend attending your respective PME course in residence. After graduation, I was given the opportunity to work in Washington at NGB and the Pentagon.

Q: What did you do there?

A: I had two different jobs. I started in the Strategic Planning office. We were designing an ANG for the year 2025. What an eye opener! The ANG is pretty comfortable doing what it's doing today—flying airplanes. Problem is, all the aircraft are getting older and there just isn't the money to replace them on a one-for-one basis. So we'll have to come up with new missions—some flying, others using technology and space. Later I became the Deputy Director for the ANG's AFSO21 office. It stands for Air Force Smart Ops for the 21st Century. With less money, the AF will have to learn to do business more efficiently…that's what AFSO is all about…continuous process improvement. It's about 80% Lean and a 20% combination of Theory of Constraints, Business Process Reengineering, and Six Sigma. I hope to look at our processes here.

Q: Why did you decide to return to the 109th?

A: It's really great to be back! I enjoyed Washington, but I missed the people. When you start out in D.C, you are assigned as a staff officer. You are given specific projects or issues, and you spend your day doing the background research, coordinating with decision-makers, and negotiating how to get this one issue approved. Being a Staffer is sort of like playing golf; you're on your own… how well you do is up to you. Working at the 109th is about people; it's more like football. It's a team sport…every player has to work together to get the 7 points.

Q: Have you noticed any differences here since you left a few years ago?

A: There's change here— a whole new leadership staff at the top…can't remember the last time that's happened. That kind of change triggers a new leadership philosophy and begins to build a new culture for the base. I notice people are gaining experience outside their career field specialties. They're going away to schools, taking tours at NGB, they're working state tours, and they're volunteering to be first sergeants for other squadrons. In the past, the idea was to be the expert in your career field. But now we're saying not only do you have to be an expert, but you also have to be a leader helping manage the change we're going through—especially since it's going to be a long road. People need to feel comfortable stepping out of that "box," and they also need to know it's a good thing.

Q: What do you see as the "mission" of the Support Group?

A: Well, the Wing's Mission is to fly airplanes. Our Group "supports" the people that it takes to complete the mission. We work the people issues, we provide the facilities, communication, airbase security, parts and services. If we do our job, maintenance can focus on the airplanes and Ops on flying them. It's Teamwork—which reminds me, I believe Family Support is a part of that Team too.

Q: Why is Family Support so important to the Wing?

A: For me, I believe I've been able to do so much because of the support back home. I've changed jobs, moved 5 or 6 times, went on numerous deployments and worked many weekends—my wife has been there supporting me the whole time. So I think family support is key to a successful wing. We're building an active Family Support group here. It would be nice to see everyone reach out and get involved. If you're married and have a family, you have certain things you can bring to the Family

File photo

Support group. There are a lot of singles here, and we could come up with things that would interest them too. We just need the volunteers to start stepping forward to find out what they're interested in doing and what we can do to make that happen. Our deployed families need to be able to feel comfortable to ask for help if they need it. That's where Family Support can really step in and make a difference. It doesn't matter if it's social time, babysitting help, something's broken at your house or if you have a legal issue—they're there.

Q: Last question, what are your thoughts on the future?

A: Change…for the AF and the ANG, we're at a crossroads…the decisions we make today will influence whether we are relevant 20 years from now. Budget constraints are colliding with the need for new—and very expensive aircraft. At the same time, AF technology is generating loads of data that will need to be analyzed. This data is critical to war-fighters, and it needs to get to them in real-time. This means there are pressures to shift to fewer airplanes and more data analysis within the AF and ANG. It's a balance… the need for "aircraft" verses "data." So we have to continually ask ourselves, "How will the outcome of these pressures affect our base? What can we do to predict these changes? How do we stay 2 steps ahead of all this so the base is here 20 years from now? And in light of these changes, what will our mission be in 2028?"

109th Airlift Wing

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On the cover:

Deborah Crisalli and Damion Castello wave good-bye to Deborah's son, Senior Airman Michael Crisalli. The 109th Security Forces Squadron left for a deployment April 3 to support Operation Enduring Freedom. ***See Page 8 for more coverage.*** *(Photo by Master Sgt. Willie Gizara)*

Senior Leader Viewpoint

The Enlisted Perspective: Maintaining a Healthy Lifestyle

File photo

Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Rodney J. McKinley

The 21st Century Air Force is truly expeditionary, so it is imperative we are all prepared to meet mission challenges. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is often the first step to accomplishing this goal. A healthy lifestyle not only boosts energy levels, endurance, and reduces stress in every day duties; it can potentially save an Airman's life in a deployed environment. Improving life routines will also help Airmen achieve and maintain Air Force fitness standards and enhance their quality of life.

Achieving a healthy lifestyle has a great deal to do with total physical fitness to include aerobic, strength, and flexibility training. It also includes eating well to achieve and maintain a healthy weight, and avoiding destructive behaviors like using tobacco and drinking alcohol excessively.

Making healthy eating choices is a critical component to staying fit and decreasing meal portion sizes help to avoid weight creep and unhealthy fat reserves. Eating right, coupled with physical activity, helps maintain proper weight and decreases the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes and many injuries.

Tobacco use in any form damages an Airman's health. Smoking causes shortness of breath, decreases lung capacity and energy levels, and damages blood vessels -- all very counter-productive to a healthy lifestyle. Second-hand smoke harms the health of everyone around -- including family and friends. In a deployed environment, tobacco use may impact safety and the mission through impaired night vision, slowed response time and impaired wound healing.

Drinking alcohol in excessive amounts can also degrade a fit warrior force. If Airmen choose to drink alcohol, moderation is key. Responsible drinking minimizes a negative effect on an Airman's personal and professional life.

Sharing healthy lifestyle activities with family and friends can be great fun and extends the benefits to those within an Airman's circle of influence. Preparing tasty, healthy meals together, going for walks, bicycling or playing organized sports adds to the quality of time spent with family and friends. Participating in physical exercise activities with co-workers adds an outstanding opportunity for team and morale-building and helps Wingmen meet their goals.

Health and fitness professionals at our Health and Wellness Centers, Fitness Centers, and Medical Treatment Facilities are uniquely qualified to assist Airmen and their family's quest for better health. I encourage everyone to take advantage of their support and expert guidance.

Striving to achieve and maintain a healthy lifestyle is a worthy goal. I know Airmen and their families will find the rewards well worth the effort in both work and play.

Chaplain's Corner

Finding hope in wake of devastation

1st Lt. Sung Lee
Chaplain

Recently, I went down to Pearlington, Miss., with my church mission team for rebuilding houses.

Not many people know that Pearlington was one of the most ravaged towns by Hurricane Katrina. The hurricane went right through the heart of the town, and there was not much left after the storm. Chaplain (Maj.) Jacob Marvel was one of the first Air National Guardsmen who went down to this very town for support mission immediately after Hurricane Katrina, and he told me what he saw down there perhaps less than a week after the disaster hit it.

And it surely surprised me that Pearlington is not much different from what Chaplain Marvel witnessed three years ago. The wounds and pains of Pearlington and its residents are still acute and ongoing. There are many families whose yards are piled up with the garbage from the hurricane. It has been three years, and their yards are filled with broken furniture, rotting clothes and sheets and rusting dishwashers or refrigerators!

I cannot imagine what it would be like to see the remnant of their devastation every day for three years, not being able to clean up or restart. Pearlington was not an affluent town to begin with, but after the hurricane, the local economy really plummeted. They no longer have postal service, and they no longer have any business. Two days before my arrival, they celebrated the reopening of the first (and only!) business since Katrina, and it was the local corndog stand.

Perhaps, the word that I heard most frequently during my stay of one week was "devastation." Everybody was talking about how devastated the town was, and how

See CHAPLAIN, page 7

Medics support Albanian humanitarian mission

Staff Sgt. Catharine Schmidt
Public Affairs

In February, the New Jersey National Guard turned to the 109th Airlift Wing for some help. They were going to Albania to administer the Hepatitis A vaccine to 1,000 children and needed Air National Guard support. Five medics here jumped at the chance to support this humanitarian mission.

Through New Jersey's State Partnership Agreement Program agreement with the country, the National Guard agreed to send medics to the area for about a week. Three Army medics joined the 109th Airmen.

"This is an excellent opportunity for both the 109th Medical/Dental Group and the 139th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron to work together and do what we do best," said Master Sgt. Jim Welsh in a press release, one of the medics here participating in the mission.

Once there, the medics got right to work. In two days, they vaccinated 1,000 children in two separate areas of the country. The teamwork with the Army, the local nurses and the Albanian army proved to be critical.

While the Albanian army provided security and helped translate, local nurses helped hold the kids while medics gave them their shots. The nurses were also able to translate for the kids and the medics.

"It was a great team effort," Sergeant Welch said.

"We now have a tighter relationship with the New Jersey soldiers," said Staff Sgt. Maureen Moffet. "(During a joint mission like this) you knock down the stereotypes of Army, Air Force and just join together to provide the support needed."

Both Airmen said the opportunity was something they would jump at again, and encouraged other Airmen to do the same.

Courtesy photos

Above, Master Sgt. James Welch immunizes a girl in Albania as local nurses provide assistance. **At right,** Master Sgt. David Morrison administers the Hepatitis A shot to a local boy. The 109th medics were supporting the New Jersey National Guard with a humanitarian mission.

Courtesy photo

Tech. Sgt. Jacqueline Sweet-McNeil visits with local children in Albania. She, along with four other 109th medics, administered 1,000 Hepatitis A shots during a humanitarian mission with the New Jersey National Guard.

"It was a good opportunity and something new," Sergeant Welch said. "It was a real good humanitarian mission."

"It was definitely rewarding for everybody who went," Sergeant Moffet said. "It was a good time, even working with the nurses, and the Albanian military was great. Morale was awesome."

Sergeant Welch said the Albanians really appreciated what was done for them. "Everybody seems to think we as Americans are there to take over a country, but we're not, we're there to help," he said. "And a lot of countries out there want us there to help because they know we're going to give them medical attention, food, clothing, whatever we can. So that's why it's important for these partnerships, so we can be out there around the world."

"I would hope that God forbid something terrible happened to our country, there would be people, medics like us, who would be willing to come to the country and help our children. You just never know," Sergeant Moffett said.

Both Airmen said they realized a lot in America is taken for granted, including taking your kids to the doctor to get their shots.

"We can bring our kids to get shots, it's just there," he said. "Over there, it's not. Parents fight to get their kids there because they want to get them vaccinated. They don't have that medication there." Having a 6-month-old, Sergeant Welch said he couldn't imagine being in that situation.

"You just take things for granted," Sergeant Moffet said. Other medical Airmen from here who participated in the mission were Master Sgt. David Morrison, Tech. Sgt. Jonathan Micahel and Tech Sgt. Jacqueline Sweet-McNeil.

"The medical professionals from the 109th Airlift Wing have served their country and the Air National Guard in all corners of the world," said Col. Anthony German, 109th AW commander, in a press release. "We are proud of the work that they do and the skill sets that they bring to this unique mission."

‘No one picks on my base!’

Public Affairs Staff

The community has always been known for showing support for the 109th Airlift Wing and its Airmen. But one local disabled woman, in particular, has gone above and beyond that support.

Since 2003, Stacy Goodman has been visiting the cops at the gate with treats to share and stories to tell.

“She’s shown up on holidays and randomly with cookies and snacks,” said Master Sgt. David Guerrera. “She’s done this out of pure generosity. She’s such a patriotic person. She even brought over pizza for our deployers.”

Photo by Master Sgt. Willie Gizara

Mrs. Goodman looks on with pride as the 109th surprises her daughter, Stacy Goodman, with thanks for the support she’s shown the base throughout the years.

Photo by Master Sgt. Willie Gizara

Chief Master Sgt. Donald Hudson presents Stacy Goodman with a certificate of appreciation for her generosity throughout the years.

On March 13, the Security Forces Squadron realized it was time to show their appreciation and recognize Miss Goodman.

They brought her over to the base and presented her with a certificate, a T-shirt, calendar, mug, squadron coin, first sergeant coin and a leadership duffle bag.

Through tears, Miss Goodman thanked the Airmen for what they did and also the sacrifice they made every day.

“You guys didn’t have to join,” she said. “I appreciate you for my freedom.”

Miss Goodman said she remembered growing up as the Vietnam War went on, and how the military was treated then.

When the war on terrorism started she wanted to do something. She started putting yellow ribbons up around the neighborhood but still wanted to do more.

Miss Goodman said when she’s feeling down, she comes out to the base to give to the cops. She said the expression on their faces is just enough to lift her spirits.

She remembers a New York Times ad that put the military in a bad light. Right away, she was infuriated and told the Airmen here, “No one picks on my base!”

Photo by Master Sgt. Willie Gizara

Stacy Goodman has been coming to the gate with treats for the Airmen here since 2003.

Photo by Master Sgt. Willie Gizara

Stacy Goodman was presented a certiciate of appreciation from the 109th Security Forces Squadron for her support and generosity over the years. From left, Master Sgt. David Guerrera, Lt. Col. John Russo, Stacy Goodman, Mrs. Goodman and Chief Master Sgt. Donald Hudson.

Fini flight hose down

Photo by Master Sgt. Willie Gizara

Lt. Col. Mary Brandt (center) walks with Lt. Col. Ada Johnston and Master Sgt. Mike Weaver following Colonel Brandt's final flight with the 139th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron.

Photo by Master Sgt. Willie Gizara

Lt. Col. Mary Brandt gets hosed down following her final flight with the 139th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron.

Chaplain, from page 4

devastated the people were. Many people claim that this "devastation" would not be resolved for many years. And you know what? I have to agree with them.

It seems that the restoration from Katrina would not be completed in our lifetime. However, I have to admit that I saw the vision of hope in the midst of devastation. I saw hundreds of young people down there working very hard to rebuild. They came from all over our country. I saw two entire high school senior classes from Colorado and Maryland come down and help out for a week as class projects. At least 200 young college kids spent their joyous spring break sweating for 10 hours a day to clean up and to restore. I saw both young and mature people from different organizations – Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Pentecostal, Jewish and Buddhists – who left their busy schedule and cozy home, come to bring hope and restoration for our suffering brothers and sisters in the southern states.

It is a great joy for the residents of Pearlington to see their houses rebuilt and yards cleaned up, but you know what? They are more thankful that so many people still remember them. They see stronger hope for their future in our presence -- not in what we bring or what we did build but in our presence. They would spend hours sharing their memories and sufferings. They would repeatedly thank us, even though we are not contractors or skilled workers, but because we are there.

Many times, we think "hope" in terms of product. How many houses are rebuilt? How much local economy is restored? These are the kind of question that many people ask to measure "hope" after Hurricane Katrina.

In fact, this is the measure for our own hope as well. What kind of car do I have? How big is my house going to be? What would be my figure of salary?

But I have witnessed that the hope is in the people. The fact that the people come, remember and work together; the fact that the boundaries between black, white or yellow is trespassed by our compassion; the fact that the people listens to the voice of suffering victims and sharing tears. I believe this is the central ingredient of hope. When we give ourselves to be present, to listen, to extend our compassion, people feel hope. I don't know how many fellow Airmen in our base feel "devastated." But I hope and pray that the people of faith would give themselves as the instrument of "hope" as they listen, hug and show their compassion for one another.

Security Forces send-off

Airmen of the 109th Security Forces Squadron leave from the base for a deployment April 3 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Kevin Coonradt, son of Staff Sgt. Stephen Coonradt, sees his father off April 3 as the 109th Security Forces Squadron leaves for a deployment to support Operation Enduring Freedom.

Senior Airman Daniel Martellotta spends some time with his daughter before leaving for a deployment April 3. The 109th Security Forces Squadron is supporting Operation Enduring Freedom.

Families and friends wave good-bye to Airmen of the 109th Security Forces Squadron April 3 as they leave for a deployment supporting Operation Enduring Freedom.

An LC-130 carrying Airmen of the 109th Security Forces Squadron takes off from the base April 3. The Airmen are deploying to support Operation Enduring Freedom.

Photos by Master Sgt. Willie Gizara

From the Family Support Center

The following are programs and events available for military members and their families:

Summer Camps

There are many summer camp opportunities for military children. Some for this year include:

Galaxy Camp -- This is a tradition at the 109th Airlift Wing. Every year military children from all branches of service come together for a week of fun at Stratton Air National Guard Base. Every year the numbers grow as more kids learn about the fun we have. This year the theme is Antarctica in honor of the International Polar Year and our unique mission in support of this. Although we will be talking about Antarctica and the science exploration in that area, we will also spend time learning what we have in common being from military families and how we can deal with the stresses that we face.

The camp, for children ages 8 to 12, will be held Aug. 18-22, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Stratton Air National Guard Base.

Junior Counselors will be needed for the camp. Children 13 and over can apply for the position. They will work alongside an adult Camp Counselor, assisting in leading a group of six to eight campers.

Registration forms for campers (Registration and Emergency Health Form) and Junior Counselors (Jr. Counselor Application and Emergency Health Form) are available through Joanna Pritchard.

Operation Purple Camps -- The National Military Family Association hosts Purple Camps every year for military children. They are free, and kids enjoy themselves while making new friends who are also part of a military family. These are generally overnight camps. There are three locations across New York. You can learn more about these opportunities and get an application at the NMFA Web site at www.nmfa.org/site/PageServer?pagename=op_new_york.

Dates of the camps are as follows:

Angola, for kids 8 to 13, June 22-27 and July 27-Aug. 1.

Greig, for kids 9 to 14, Aug. 10-15.

Redwood, for kids 8-15, July 13-18 and Aug. 10-15.

Shiloh's Edge -- Shiloh's Edge is an adventure camp program in the Capital District. Every year they offer trips just for military youth and offer them for free through scholarships. Scholarship money is raised by youth across NY state who want to find a way to support kids their age in the military. This year, they are offering three trips. It is run by trained professionals, and the kids have a great time. They would be glad to talk to you about these trips, and they have other trips planned that they are willing to offer for free as well. This is a Christian organization.

Dates for the programs are as follows:

Bivouac Adventures for students of military families Rock Climbing in NY's Adirondacks, July 1-2.

Rock Climbing and Whitewater Rafting, July 15-17 and Aug. 20-22.

These trips are open to students of military families, serving either at home or overseas, these families deal with challenges that many kids their age don't experience. The trips will be run in the Adirondacks and are open to the novice and the experienced student. Scholarships are available.

For more information, visit Shiloh's Edge Web site at www.shilohsedge.org.

Tickets for Troops

"Tickets for Troops" is a new program at Proctors in Schenectady. This is an effort to show appreciation to the men and women in uniform and their families. They have generously offered a 20 percent military discount to most of their shows. You must call the box office to verify show times and dates and order your tickets. The discount is for military ID card holders. For more information and a complete list of events, visit www.proctors.org.

Walk to Iraq and Back

The Walk to Iraq and Back is a great way to encourage us to do something that is both physically and mentally rewarding. Getting out with friends and family is a great way to exercise, but this is a way to also show our support for the men and women who deploy.

To walk from Scotia to Baghdad, Iraq, and back would be 11,800 miles. That is how many miles we would like to log. Individuals and groups, military and nonmilitary can participate. We already have several who have signed up to participate as individuals and some groups in the community that would like to support us in this way. We started in April and will be ending in October. People can register at any time. We will have many of our members deployed for the war this summer. This is a great way for us to do something to show our support to them and their families.

To register, go online to www.startchallengetool.com. Click in the First Time Registration box, "Register." Fill in all of the required fields (e-mail address becomes your login).

The company name must read "109th Airlift Wing". The company Zip code is 12302.

Instructions for registering:

If you are registering as a group, you must still fill in all of the categories. You can decide how you would like that to appear. Remember that the e-mail address you enter will be the group's login and everyone in that group will need to know the password to login and enter miles. If you use an e-mail for the group, it cannot be used a second time for an individual.

It will ask you to return to the home page to login. Use your e-mail address and password you just created.

To enter your miles, login and you will see a home page for you, and your name should be at the top of the page. Click on the "Activity Diary" button near the top of the screen. On the left side of the screen, you will see "Add an Activity."

You must enter activity, date, minutes and intensity level. Miles can be added by putting in the number of steps from a pedometer and clicking "Convert Steps to Miles" or by simply putting in the number of miles. Click "Save Activity". You will now see your activity listed in your activity log on the right side of the page. Your miles will automatically be added to the 109th Airlift Wing total.

There are other great resources available on the site and from the American Heart Association. As of right now, the "Company Scoreboard" button near the top of the screen will not show you an accurate count for us. The company is working on a fix, but your miles are still counting in our favor so please don't let that deter you.

For more information on camps, Tickets for Troops, Walk to Iraq and Back or any other family support programs, contact Joanna Pritchard at 344-2357 or by e-mail at Joanna.pritchard@nyscot.ang.af.mil.

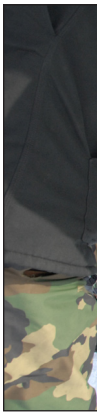
Operation Deep Freeze

Photos by Senior Airman Stephen Girolami

Capt. Eric Wood flies into San Diego after a trip from Antarctica.

The 109th Airlift Wing's engine shop works on an LC-130, No. 1094, while in Antarctica in February

Staff Sgt. Les Gould taxis in an LC-130, No. 0493, at Willie Field in February. He is a crew chief with the 109th Airlift Wing.



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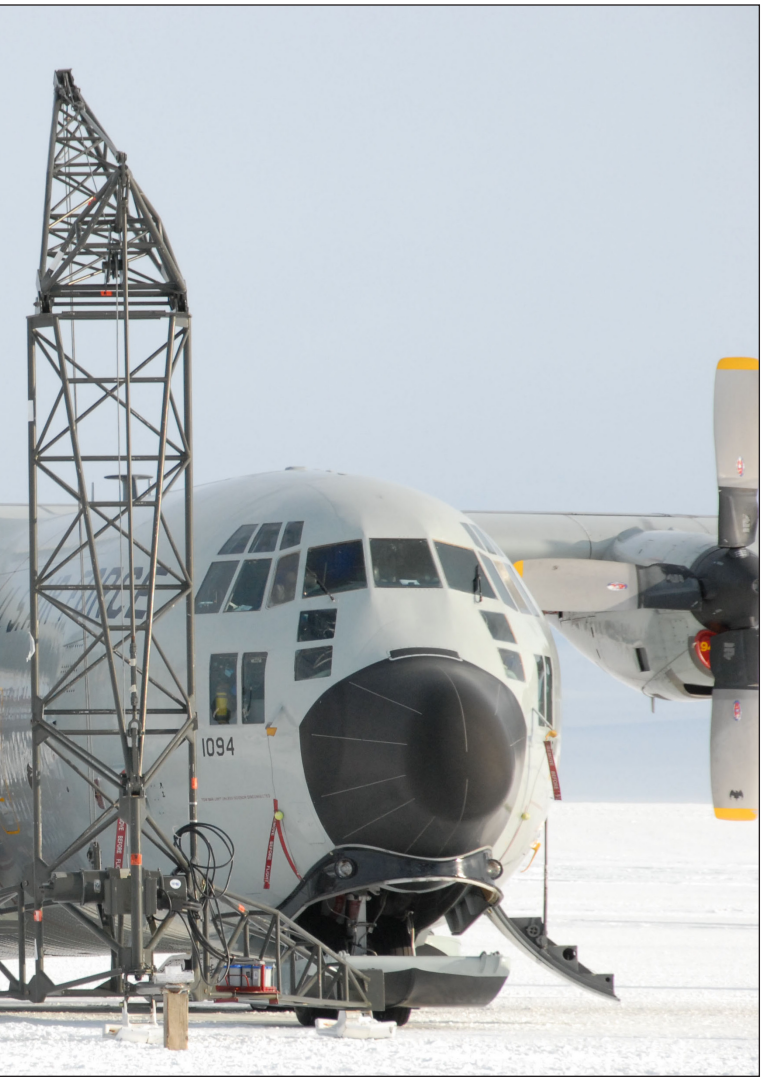

to support Operation Deep Freeze.

Operation Deep Freeze supports operations in Antarctica and runs from October to March.

Airman 1st Class Dustin Vincent fuels up an LC-130 in Antarctica. He is with the 109th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron.

ft Wing maintainers check the “ski”-matics on an LC-130 y.

A sun shot looking out toward Ross Island.

Military revs up campaign against tobacco

Senior Airman Brent Skeen
Air Combat Command Public Affairs

LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va. (AFPN) -- Military officials here boosted its efforts to campaign against the use of tobacco by providing a number of strategies recently.

Quitting for other people is the focal part of the campaign, which urges tobacco users to consider dropping the habit for loved ones. The expense of taxpayers is also a focus point for the campaign.

Every year the Department of Defense spends approximately $1.6 billion in additional medical care due to the harmful affects of tobacco. The Air Force alone spends about $115 million annually.

Each year the Air Force loses the equivalent of an estimated 3,000 people's worth of work because of tobacco use, said Col. Kenneth Knight, the Air Combat Command chief of the Aerospace Medicine Division.

Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Rodney J. McKinley is in newspaper and television ads promoting the Web site youcanquit2.org.

The DOD site uses visual methods to attract young adults who use tobacco. Unique features of the site include live online counselors who offer free support to quit, a calculator to prove how much tobacco costs over time, and games as an alternative to smoke breaks.

Some examples of games include Texas Hold 'Em and a word game similar to hangman.

"Our site caters to active-duty military in the 18 to 24 range," wrote an online tobacco cessation coach in a chat session, "but we will not turn anyone away who wants support in kicking the habit."

Education is a third focal point of the campaign. The harmful affects from tobacco has been well documented over the years, and officials at health and wellness centers at Air Force bases are available to discuss them.

"Heart disease, cancer, and stroke are the three leading causes of death, and they are all associated with tobacco use," said Judith Blitz a teacher for tobacco cessation classes at the Langley Air Force Base HAWC. "Tobacco users have a higher absentee rate. They're at a higher risk of getting colds and the flu because of the mucus -- when you get mucus in your lungs, you're at a higher risk for bacteria and viruses."

She also pointed out that tobacco damages almost every organ in the human body.

Pope arrives at Andrews

Photo by Senior Airman Renae L. Kleckner

Pope Benedict XVI talks to President George W. Bush upon his arrival as he is escorted by a joint honor guard April 15 at Andrews Air Force Base, Md. The pope visited the United States for a week.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Suzanne M. Day

Pope Benedict XVI talks to President George W. Bush upon his arrival as he is escorted past a joint honor guard April 15 at Andrews Air Force Base, Md. The pope is visiting the United States for a week and will meet with President Bush at the White House, address the presidents of Roman Catholic colleges and universities, and celebrate Mass at Nationals Park in Washington, D.C., and Yankee Stadium in New York City. The pontiff was selected as the 265th pope on April 19, 2005.

Air Guard migrates to AF Public Web

Capt. Robert Leese
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. -- The Air National Guard has joined the Air Force in consolidating its public Web sites under one network, the Air Force Public Web.

The Air Guard's public Web site has a new look and feel similar to other Air Force Web sites currently using the Air Force Public Information Management System, or AFPIMS.

A Web-based content management tool, AFPIMS allows AFPW to run as one entity and eliminates the need for Web-developing expertise.

"This gives content providers more time to focus on the content, and security and policy review of information they post online," said Joe Bela, chief of AFPW at the Air Force News Agency in San Antonio.

The AFPIMS gives content-approval authorities the mechanisms for editing, approving or rejecting Web content, while administrative authorities are able to build Web pages, create content tabs, administer usernames and passwords and control access to content.

Creating a standard template for Air Force Web sites was one of the main goals of the AFPW program.

"AFPW has standardized the appearance of public Web sites across the Air Force by giving content providers one Web publishing tool, AFPIMS, for all to use," said Bela. "Having a consistent Web page format allows visitors to easily find what they are looking for, no matter which Air Force site they visit.

"The program improves security and performance while decreasing infrastructure, manpower and operating costs -- more than $30 million annually according to a 2006 cost analysis," he said. "Bringing the Guard under our umbrella is the last major project we face before we can truly say AFPW supports the Total Force."

MPF Notes

From the Superintendent, Senior Master Sgt. Deo Proietti

"The Position of Honor"

What is the position of honor? The position of honor is always to "your" right.

When entering automobiles, small boats, and elevators. Juniors enter first, senior last. On exit: the senior leaves first and juniors last. The place of honor is always to the right, so the senior person will sit on the right. This also holds true if you are walking with two or more people (the senior person is always on the right).

It is the junior person who is responsible for lining-up on the correct side of the senior officer (to the left). You may be asking yourself, "Why did he point this out, as this should be obvious to everyone?"

Although, I agree with that logic, it doesn't seem to be the case. It can be easy to lose sight of the most basic things we've been taught. Some of you have worked for years with each other. Throughout the years, some officers and enlisted have built close relationships, and have become complacent.

It's incumbent on the junior member to extend the senior member their earned courtesies, whether it's "The Position of Honor" or a salute. Something to consider with a UCI quickly approaching.

Relocations

Please do not delete system generated e-mails before reading them. DD Form 214s and NGB 22s are all done electronically through the vMPF at this time.

When the MPF generates one of these forms on you, you are required to review it online. The vMPF will send a system generated e-mail to you, stating that your DD Form 214 or NGB 22 Worksheet is ready for your review.

Once logged into the vMPF you will click on the "Suspenses" link at the top left of the page and follow the correct links to either the DD214 or NGB 22 to review.

Upon completion you will be directed to choose one of two options: the worksheet is correct with no changes, or the worksheet requires changes.

If the worksheet requires changes, you will be provided an electronic form to provide those changes.

At that point, a system generated e-mail will be sent to the Relocations section in the MPF letting us know that you have reviewed your document. You will also receive another system generated e-mail when your DD214 or NGB 22 has been finalized.

Please contact Master Sgt. Jessica Panis at 344-2095 with any questions or concerns.

Testing days & time:

Tuesdays at 8 a.m.
Sundays of each UTA at 8:45 a.m.

Please schedule mandatory CDC exams through your Unit Training Manager or supervisor. Voluntary/PME exams can be scheduled by calling 344-2406 or 344-2107 or e-mail BaseTraining@nyscot.ang.af.mil.

PME exam appointments can be scheduled by e-mailing BaseTraining@nyscot.ang.af.mil. CDC exam appointments can be scheduled through your Unit Training Manager via your supervisor.

MPF Hours of Operation

Monday through Friday
8 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
For ID cards:
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday
8 - 11 a.m., noon to 3 p.m.

ID cards are not available on Friday, unless it's an emergency.

UTA Hours
7:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.

CSS Traning takes place Sundays from noon to 3 p.m.

Communications Flight

Photos by Master Sgt. Willie Gizara

Above, Lt. Col. Deborah Reid relinquishes command of the 109th Communications Flight. **At right,** Maj. Mark Armstrong took command of the 109th CF in a ceremony.

Aeromedical Dental Squadron

Photo by Master Sgt. Christine Wood

Lt. Col. Ada Johnston took command of the 139th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron. Col. Mary Brandt is the outgoing 139th AES commander.

Aerial Port Squadron

Photo by Master Sgt. Willie Gizara

Maj. Phillip Crane (right) relinquished command of the 109th Aerial Port Squadron.

Firefighter runs for Wounded Warriors

Staff Sgt. Catharine Schmidt
Public Affairs

Running up stairs is part of a firefighter's job. So when Staff Sgt. Mike Lazzari heard about the Empire State Building Run-Up event, the firefighter knew it was a challenge he could tackle. And he did, in 15 minutes, 13 seconds.

Sergeant Lazzari, with the 109th Civil Engineer Squadron's fire protection flight, competed in the 31st annual New York Road Runners on Feb. 5. The race is 1,576 steps (86 flights), and this year more than 200 runners from around the world took part. Sergeant Lazzari finished in 67th place overall.

"I heard about it and it looked like a fun race," said the New York City firefighter. "Our job as firemen is to climb flights and flights with all this heavy gear on, so I figured if anything it would help me be better prepared for my job."

Sergeant Lazzari participated, not only to help him with his job, but also to raise awareness for the Wounded Warriors Project. He became interested in the cause after a deployment to Iraq.

The organization's aim is "to raise awareness and enlist the public's aid for the needs of severely injured servicemembers, to help injured servicemembers aid and assist each other, and to provide unique, direct programs and services to meet their needs," according to woundedwarriorsproject.org.

"I just wanted to do something to help these soldiers," he said.

In 2006, Sergeant Lazzari also ran for the cause in the New York City marathon. In that run, he wore his military uniform and 25 pounds of firefighter gear while carrying an American flag. In doing so, the sergeant raised more than $4,000 for the Wounded Warriors Project.

Sergeant Lazzari said the Empire State Building Run-Up was a great experience.

"It was my first time doing it," he said. "I was a tad slower than I wanted to be, but that was because in the very beginning there was a strategy I wasn't aware of."

According to the NYRR Web site, "The men's start is traditionally a rough-and-tumble affair … due to the strategic advantage of gaining a top position for the early climbing stages."

"There were different waves of about 60 people," Sergeant Lazzari said. "You start in the hallway about 30 feet from the stairwell, and it's a group start, so you have to jockey into a position. … They didn't start spreading out until the 10th or 15th flight. I kind of got caught in the pack and probably gained about a minute because of it."

But coming in at about 15 minutes was still a great accomplishment for him. Although he has no marathons planned yet for the future, he said it is something he would like to do again. Especially if it can raise awareness for the Wounded Warriors Project.

For more information on the cause, or to donate money to the project, visit woundedwarriorproject.org.

Courtesy photo

Staff Sgt. Mike Lazzari runs in the New York City marathon in 2006. He raised more than $4,000 for the Wounded Warriors Project.

Courtesy photo

Staff Sgt. Mike Lazzari runs in the New York City marathon in 2006. He raised more than $4,000 for the Wounded Warriors Project.

Summer Lunch Program under way, volunteers needed; summer picnic scheduled for August

By Retired Lt. Col. Tom Noel
Alumni Representative

The 109th Airlift Wing Alumni Association put on a very successful St. Patrick's Day dinner at the All Ranks Club on March 12. Food for 100 people was prepared and served to everyone's satisfaction. Thanks to everyone who assisted to put the dinner on.

The Summer Wednesday Lunch Program began April 30. We are always looking for volunteers to help with the program.

Volunteers are needed between about 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. on scheduled lunch days.

Please let the Summer Lunch Program committee know if you can help and when you can help with a few of these.

The 109th AW Alumni Association Summer Picnic will be held Saturday afternoon on Aug. 2 at the Guan Ho Ha Fish and Game Club, plan on attending for some plain old camaraderie.

The annual election of officers was held during the January meeting, and here are the results:

Milt Terwilliger, President; Charley Shatley, Vice President; Bob Guizor, Secretary; Ken Bliss, Treasurer; Board of Directors, Bill Pickney (3-year term), Howard Ray (3-year term), Dick Weakley (2-year term), and Tom Noel(2-year term).

The Senate has passed legislation clarifying U.S. law to ensure that veterans and servicemembers "not in uniform" can salute the American flag.

Senate bill 1877, sponsored by Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla., addressed the ambiguity of current law, which states that veterans and servicemembers not in uniform should place their hand over their hearts, without specifying whether they can or should salute the flag.

"The salute is a form of honor and respect, representing pride in one's military service," Inhofe said.

"Unfortunately, current U.S. law leaves confusion as to whether veterans and servicemembers out of uniform can or should salute the flag."

Inhofe said he believes this is "an appropriate way to honor and recognize the 25 million veterans who have served in the military and remain as role models to other citizens.

Those who are currently serving or have served in the military have earned this right, and their recognition will be an inspiration to others.

Current or retired members of the 109th can be recognized by buying a brick for $35.00. Each brick will be placed at the Stratton Air National Guard base memorial located at the base of the Wing flag pole area.

You can purchase one for yourself or you can recognize other members of the 109th AW. The number of bricks is limited and will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

Profits will be used to purchase bronze plaques commemorating the unit's past aircraft, Wing commanders and command chiefs.

Contact Chief Master Sgt. Mike Cristiano at 344-2062, and make checks payable to 109th Chief's Council.

The 109th Airlift Wing is continuing a proud tradition. In January, the 109th AW was announced as a recipient of an Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, congratulations to all members of the 109th Airlift Wing.

Col. Anthony P. German, Wing Commander, announced in January that Col. Timothy J. LaBarge has been selected as the new 109th Airlift Wing Vice Commander. Colonel LaBarge of Tupper Lake, N.Y., joined the 109th AW in March. Colonel LaBarge comes to the 109th from the Director of Staff-Air Component, Headquarters New York Air National Guard position.

As the Director of Staff, Colonel LaBarge is the principal adviser to the Adjutant General and/or Assistant Adjutant on a broad range of matters concerning the United States Air Force and Air National Guard. He also served as the state headquarters chief of staff or chief executive officer.

Colonel LaBarge also served in the Directorate of Total Force Integration, Air Force Strategic Planning, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C. Welcome aboard, and it is good having you as the new Vice Commander of the 109th Airlift Wing.

The members of the 109th Airlift Wing Alumni Association would like to send their condolences to the families of the following individuals who have passed away over the past few months:

Retired Lt. Col. Philip E. Hosegood Jr., 85, passed away Jan. 7; retired Brig. Gen. Stanley W. Henstreet, 82, former commander of the 109th AW, passed away Jan. 20; retired Robert J. Hummel, 74, passed away Feb. 9; retired Edward J. Sinkora, 79, passed away March 16.

Our thoughts and prayers are with these individuals and their families; they will be missed greatly.

There have been many individuals who have retired in the past few months. If you know any of them, please invite them to our meeting the third Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the All Ranks Club. Their first year of membership of the Alumni Association is "free." We always look forward to seeing new faces and members at our meetings.

The 109th Airlift Wing Alumni Association members would like to welcome home Col. Max Della Pia, previous commander of the 109th Airlift Wing, from his deployment to Afghanistan as squadron commander to an aviation drone unit.

Thank you for your service and sacrifice, welcome back, job well done.

The Skibird Quarterly Publication/Magazine is online at the DMNA Web site at http://dmna.state.ny.us, under the heading of Guard News.

Until the next quarterly issue of this Skibird publication, stay Happy, Healthy, Safe, Prosperous and "Think Spring."

Recruiting

By Master Sgt. Kim Bowman
Recruiting Office Supervisor

Skills USA 2008 - The 109th Airlift Wing hosted part of the 2008 Regional Skills USA competition on base and the rest at Schenectady Community College. Junior and senior high school students at local Vo-Tec (BOCES) centers competed in their specialty to win scholarships and prizes. The Air National Guard is a national sponsor for Skills USA. There were about 180 teachers, judges, students and parents on base March 19 and 300 at the college. There were many base volunteers and we wish to thank them. We appreciate their help.

AFOQT - This should help clarify the Air Force Officer's Qualification Test (AFOQT) process. The recruiting office schedules all Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) testing.

If you are close to obtaining your bachelor's degree and wish to take the AFOQT, please call recruiting and speak with Master Sgt. Bowman at 344-2072. We must input your information into our Air Force Recruiting Information System (afriss) and schedule it the week before taking the test. Our Albany MEPS offers the test twice a month, the first and third Tuesday in the morning.

Please note, you are only allowed to take the AFOQT twice in your lifetime, so please review the study guide and be prepared.

If you have taken the test, you may review your results at the Web site, https://w20.afpc.randolph.af.mil/afoqtsnet20/Default.aspx.

There are minimum scores noted in the officer accession regulation, ANGI 36-2005, table 3.4.

If you are interested in officer opportunities, please stop by recruiting and they will be happy to answer all your questions.

Courtesy photo

Standing are, Senior Master Sgt. Robert Bolger, Tech. Sgt. Andrew Stearns, Master Sgt. Donna Roper, Tech. Sgt. Joanna Walters, Staff Sgt. John Blackburn and Master Sgt. Kim Bowman.

Officer Vacancy Announcements are e-mailed to all personnel whenever an opening exists here at the 109th. You must prepare a commissioning package with the particular requirements based on the job. The DMNA Web site lists all Air Guard officer vacancy announcements for the state at www.dmna.state.ny.us/jobs.

Unit Referrals remain the best way for us to fill our vacancies with great applicants. Mainly because our unit members have known the people for quite some time and can give us a good idea what to expect when we meet the referrals. We always appreciate the chance to share the same opportunities with new members, whether it's career training, travel or the educational benefits. Contact us with your referrals!

How can you earn $2k for an enlistment? Answer: **G-RAP**! For more information go to www.guardrecruitingassistant.com and get started in the program.

All Retraining Actions must be coordinated with the new Retention Office Manager, Tech. Sgt. Andrew Stearns. One reason for this requirement is that a member who is an incentive program participant may be faced with recoupment of bonus money if voluntarily retraining to a nonbonus AFSC. For information about retraining opportunities, or to coordinate a retraining action, contact Sergeant Stearns at 344-2315. There are many retraining opportunities throughout the base.

Long and Suceesful Careers in the Air National Guard often begin with a simple call to our Recruiting Office at 344-2454 or 800-524-5070.

Is there someone in your office who deserves special recognition?
How about an Airman just arriving to the base?
If you answered yes, highlight them in the next issue of *the Skibird* for the
Who We Are section!
Call or e-mail Staff Sgt. Catharine Schmidt for a copy of the form and/or to set up a time for an interview. Don't miss the chance to get your Airmen recognized for a job well done!
To contact Sergeant Schmidt, you can call the Public Affairs office at 344-2423 or e-mail her at catharine.schmidt@nyscot.ang.af.mil. Or e-mail the skibird at skibird@nyscot.ang.af.mil.

Wing Airmen of the Year

Photos by Master Sgt. Christine Wood

Wing Command Chief Master Sgt. Charlie Lucia speaks to attendees of the Wing Airmen on the Year luncheon on April 6.

Wing Commander Col. Anthony German presents Senior Airman Slade Tulip with the Wing Airman of the Year 2007 plaque.

Wing Commander Col. Anthony German presents Tech. Sgt. Andrew Stearns with the Wing NCO of the Year 2007 plaque.

Wing Commander Col. Anthony German presents Master Sgt. John Rayone with a coin and the Wing Senior NCO of the Year 2007 plaque.

Promotions & Awards

Jan. 14 through April 4

Officer Promotions

Lieutenant Colonel
Danny Lincoln – AS
William Salvaggio – AS
Jamie Sheppard – OSF

Major
Leroy Kinlocke – AS
Ty Randall – CES

Captain
Ernest Lancto – LRS
Timothy Novak – AS

First Lieutenant
Daniel Glick – AES
Tammy Ostrowski – AES

Enlisted Promotions

Chief Master Sergeant
Michelle Morgan – AW

Senior Master Sergeant
Raymond Kiefl – SFS
Maryalice Rebis – JFHQ
Philip Wend – MXM

Master Sergeant
Lisa Aldrete – AES
Joseph Archambeault – AMXS
Gordon Nichols – MXG
John O'Brien – MXM
Jessica Panis – MSF
Kristy Stearns – JFHQ
Jeffrey Trottier – OSF
Bernadette Weaver – AES

Technical Sergeant
Brandon Hudson – AW
Terra Martin – SVF
David Miller – CES
Bruce Terry – MXM
Darrell Washington – CES

Staff Sergeant
Daniel Godfrey – Stu Flt
Edward Hague – AW
Travis Hudson – MXM
Daniel Martellotta – SSgt
Brett Pacanowski – AW
Aubrey Pagan – SVF
Erik Peters – SSgt
Donald Quigan – SFS

Senior Airman
Justin Beyer – MXM
Daniel Keegan – LRS
Carlton Kuhlmeier – SFS

Air Medal
Lt Col Bateman – JFHQ
SSgt Green – AES

Meritorious Service Medal
Col Surani – MG
Lt Col Gregory – MG
Lt Col Reid – CF
Lt Col Wintsch – MSG
Maj Bernasconi – AS
Maj Deconno – AS
Maj Green – AS
Maj Hemstreet – MXM
Maj Powell – AS
CMSgt Helbling – MSF
CMSgt Willoughby – MXM
SMSgt Davis – AW
SMSgt Lisowski – AS

Air Force Commendation Medal
Lt Col Kobierski – OSF
SMSgt Maryalice Rebis – JFHQ
MSgt Archibald – MOF
MSgt Beachler – MXM
MSgt Rogers – CES
SSgt Melius – MXM
SSgt Moon – SFS

Air Force Achievement Medal
MSgt Trefzger – MXM

The Skibird has gone quarterly!

Because of this, submission deadlines have also changed. If you'd like to submit an article to be published, it will need to be sent to the Public Affairs Office no later than the beginning of the first UTA of each quarter.

The next issue will be published in the summer. Therefore, submissions for that issue are due no later than **June 7**.

For submissions and story ideas, please e-mail skibird@nyscot.ang.af.mil or Staff Sgt. Catharine Schmidt at catharine.schmidt@nyscot.ang.af.mil. You can also call the office at 344-2396 or 344-2423.

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Photo illustration by Staff Sgt. Brett Bouchard

Mission statement

Provide the most professional theatre combat forces, ready to rapidly deploy statewide, worldwide and pole to pole.

Vision statement

A united military organization of empowered individuals building on our proud tradition of serving country, state and community; leaning forward, ready to meet combat and peacetime challenges throughout the world.